

Out-of-cycle DEROS extension requests on rise

By Capt. Patrick Ryder
Public affairs

Personnel officials here are battling a significant increase recently in the number of out-of-cycle date of return from overseas extension requests.

The increase spells more work for service members and military personnel officials and could delay people's replacements from their permanent-change-of-station to RAF Lakenheath.

This is a problem because processing these requests doubles the workload of everyone involved, said Capt. Julie Boit, 48th Military Personnel Flight commander.

"Extra paperwork by the member, group (commanders), squadron commanders and the MPF must be done. Furthermore, requests of this type are not guaranteed," Boit said. "The Air Force Personnel Center is the approving authority for all changes to DEROS, and if it doesn't meet the requirements for out-of-cycle requests, it probably won't be approved."

No one's sure exactly why, but the recent increase in requested out-of-cycle extensions, which almost doubled in the last six months, has occurred despite the MPF's best efforts to keep them low, said 1st Lt. Becky Knapp, 48th MPF relocations and employment chief. What's worse,

the late requests often affect people's replacements.

"It's like a chain effect," said Knapp. "Last minute DEROS extensions can result in (a person's) replacement and their family being diverted to another location. This ripple effect then continues on with the replacement's replacement and so on."

The result is an increase in PCS costs for the individuals involved and the Air Force, said Knapp.

Every military member assigned to the 48th Fighter Wing receives a "DEROS option RIP" with a suspense about 12 to 13 months before they're due to depart, according to Boit. Members are given the option to maintain their original DEROS, extend their DEROS in monthly increments for one - 36 months, do an in-place consecutive overseas tour or elect for an indefinite DEROS.

"Any DEROS requests or corrections made after the suspense date are considered out-of-cycle requests," she explained. "Out-of-cycle requests can only be considered for unique mission requirements or humanitarian reasons, and must be approved by the support group commander."

All requests are then forwarded to United States Air Forces in Europe (Headquarters), with the AFPC as the final approval au-

Wing names Top Guns

The wing weapons and tactics flight recently announced the names of the Liberty Wing's Top Guns for the past six months.

"Pilots' and weapons system officers' performances are rated in many categories," said Capt. Alex DeFazio, chief of weapons and tactics air-to-ground division. "We compile their results every six months to determine who the wing's top flyers are. Top Gun winners display a consistent high level of performance in both air-to-ground and air-to-air events."

The following are the current 48th Fighter Wing top guns:

Air-to-Ground Top Gun

Low angle-low drag	Lt. Col. George Doran, 492nd FS
Low angle-high drag	Maj. Charles Robinson, 492nd FS
Systems laydown	1st Lt. Mike Webb, 494th FS
Loft	Maj. Dwight Mentzer, 48th OSS
Overall pilot	Lt. Col. George Doran, 492nd FS
Overall weapon system officer	1st Lt. Mike Webb, 494th FS
Top flight	A Flight, 492nd FS

Air-to-Air Top Gun

F-15C wingman	Capt. Jim Dutton, 493rd FS
F-15C two-ship flight lead	Capt. Dean Tremps, 493rd FS
F-15C four-ship flight lead	Capt. Reed Drake, 493rd FS
F-15E pilot	Capt. Chris Knehans, 492nd FS
F-15E weapon system officer	Capt. Mike Quintini, 494th FS
F-15C flight	D Flight, 493rd FS
F-15E flight	E Flight, 494th FS

thority, Boit added.

However, there's a way to ensure that service members and the MPF don't encounter these difficult problems, said Knapp.

"A proactive approach on the part of the member, supervisors, commanders and the orderly room can help fix the problem," said the lieutenant. "The member must make the decision to stay or go when the DEROS option RIP comes out, not later. They need to

research their options ... and if they have questions, ask their orderly room and the MPF.

"It's crucial that the military member make an informed decision," she said. "One that's best for them, their career and their family."

Anyone with any questions about DEROS extensions can call their unit orderly room or 48th MPF customer service at Ext. 1845.



Photo courtesy of Stars & Stripes

Youth center grand opening

Maj. Gen. Tad Oelstrom, 3rd Air Force commander, and Taylor Hermes, cut the ribbon at the youth center grand opening Saturday. More than 1500 people attended the event, according to 48th Services Squadron officials.

"What a great day this is for the families of RAF Lakenheath and this whole military community," said Col. Doug Richardson, 48th Fighter Wing commander. "Lt. Col. Steve Zander and his civil engineers, working closely with the contractor and site manager, Graham Kirk, pulled off a superb finished product far ahead of schedule. I think this (youth center) represents the epitome of good non-appropriated fund management, and I commend Lt. Col. Michael O'Dell and the 48th SVS for making it happen. What a great place this is for our kids to learn, play and grow."